

2.9 CRYSTAL PROTEIN COMPOSITIONS AS INSECTICIDES AND METHODS OF USE

The inventors contemplate that the crystal protein compositions disclosed herein will find particular utility as insecticides for topical and/or systemic application to field crops, grasses, fruits and vegetables, and ornamental plants.

Disclosed and claimed is a composition comprising an insecticidally-effective amount of a Cry1C* crystal protein composition. The composition preferably comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:59, or SEQ ID NO:61 or biologically-functional equivalents thereof. The insecticide composition may also comprise a Cry1C* crystal protein that is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence having the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:58, or SEQ ID NO:60, or, alternatively, a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes to the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:58, or SEQ ID NO:60 under conditions of moderate stringency.

The insecticide comprises a *Bacillus thuringiensis* NRRL B-21590, NRRL B-21591, NRRL B-21592, NRRL B-21638, NRRL B-21639, NRRL B-21640, NRRL B-21609, or NRRL B-21610 cell, or a culture of these cells, or a mixture of one or more *B. thuringiensis* cells which express one or more of the novel crystal proteins of the invention. In certain aspects it may be desirable to prepare compositions which contain a plurality of crystal proteins, either native or modified, for treatment of one or more types of susceptible insects.

The inventors contemplate that any formulation methods known to those of skill in the art may be employed using the proteins disclosed herein to prepare such bioinsecticide compositions. It may be desirable to formulate whole cell preparations, cell extracts, cell suspensions, cell homogenates, cell lysates, cell supernatants, cell filtrates, or cell pellets of a cell culture (preferably a bacterial cell culture such as a *Bacillus thuringiensis* NRRL B-21590, NRRL B-21591, NRRL B-21592, NRRL B-21638, NRRL B-21639, NRRL B-21640, NRRL B-21609, or NRRL B-21610 culture) that expresses one or more *cry1C** DNA segments to produce the encoded Cry1C*

protein(s) or peptide(s). The methods for preparing such formulations are known to those of skill in the art, and may include, *e.g.*, desiccation, lyophilization, homogenization, extraction, filtration, centrifugation, sedimentation, or concentration of one or more cultures of bacterial cells, such as *Bacillus* NRRL B-21590, NRRL B-21591, NRRL B-21592, NRRL B-21638, NRRL B-21639, NRRL B-21640, NRRL B-21609, or NRRL B-21610 cells, which express the Cry1C* peptide(s) of interest.

In one preferred embodiment, the bioinsecticide composition comprises an oil flowable suspension comprising lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, or crystals which contain one or more of the novel crystal proteins disclosed herein. Preferably the cells are *B. thuringiensis* cells, however, any such bacterial host cell expressing the novel nucleic acid segments disclosed herein and producing a crystal protein is contemplated to be useful, such as *Bacillus* spp., including *B. megaterium*, *B. subtilis*; *B. cereus*, *Escherichia* spp., including *E. coli*, and/or *Pseudomonas* spp., including *P. cepacia*, *P. aeruginosa*, and *P. fluorescens*. Alternatively, the oil flowable suspension may consist of a combination of one or more of the following compositions: lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, crystals, and/or purified crystal proteins.

In a second preferred embodiment, the bioinsecticide composition comprises a water dispersible granule or powder. This granule or powder may comprise lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, or crystals which contain one or more of the novel crystal proteins disclosed herein. Preferred sources for these compositions include bacterial cells such as *B. thuringiensis* cells, however, bacteria of the genera *Bacillus*, *Escherichia*, and *Pseudomonas* which have been transformed with a DNA segment disclosed herein and expressing the crystal protein are also contemplated to be useful. Alternatively, the granule or powder may consist of a combination of one or more of the following compositions: lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, crystals, and/or purified crystal proteins.

In a third important embodiment, the bioinsecticide composition comprises a wettable powder, spray, emulsion, colloid, aqueous or organic solution, dust, pellet, or colloidal concentrate. Such a composition may contain either unlysed or lysed bacterial cells, spores, crystals, or cell extracts as described above, which contain one or more of

the novel crystal proteins disclosed herein. Preferred bacterial cells are *B. thuringiensis* cells, however, bacteria such as *B. megaterium*, *B. subtilis*, *B. cereus*, *E. coli*, or *Pseudomonas* spp. cells transformed with a DNA segment disclosed herein and expressing the crystal protein are also contemplated to be useful. Such dry forms of the insecticidal compositions may be formulated to dissolve immediately upon wetting, or alternatively, dissolve in a controlled-release, sustained-release, or other time-dependent manner. Alternatively, such a composition may consist of a combination of one or more of the following compositions: lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, crystals, and/or purified crystal proteins.

In a fourth important embodiment, the bioinsecticide composition comprises an aqueous solution or suspension or cell culture of lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, crystals, or a mixture of lysed or unlysed bacterial cells, spores, and/or crystals, such as those described above which contain one or more of the novel crystal proteins disclosed herein. Such aqueous solutions or suspensions may be provided as a concentrated stock solution which is diluted prior to application, or alternatively, as a diluted solution ready-to-apply.

For these methods involving application of bacterial cells, the cellular host containing the Crystal protein gene(s) may be grown in any convenient nutrient medium, where the DNA construct provides a selective advantage, providing for a selective medium so that substantially all or all of the cells retain the *B. thuringiensis* gene. These cells may then be harvested in accordance with conventional ways. Alternatively, the cells can be treated prior to harvesting.

When the insecticidal compositions comprise *B. thuringiensis* cells, spores, and/or crystals containing the modified crystal protein(s) of interest, such compositions may be formulated in a variety of ways. They may be employed as wettable powders, granules or dusts, by mixing with various inert materials, such as inorganic minerals (phyllosilicates, carbonates, sulfates, phosphates, and the like) or botanical materials (powdered corncobs, rice hulls, walnut shells, and the like). The formulations may include spreader-sticker adjuvants, stabilizing agents, other pesticidal additives, or surfactants. Liquid formulations may be aqueous-based or non-aqueous and employed as foams, suspensions,